

Post Thrift Shop offers a houseful of hidden treasures

Store has everything a soldier needs to furnish any room

By Pvt. Leah R. Burton
Northwest Guardian

Spc. Newbie is a fictional any-soldier, but she could be any one of the many soldiers who are new to Fort Lewis. This is her first duty station, and is in need of everything for a new barracks room, house or apartment. Properly equipping one's new home tends to be a costly venture.

Luckily, the Fort Lewis Thrift Shop carries a lot of items for such an adventure.

The Thrift Shop is located in Building 5170 on Utah Avenue, and sells men's, women's, children's, infants and military clothing. It also has kitchenware, appliances, furniture, toys and bicycles, said Linda Walker, manager of the store.

Parents can even purchase children's

Halloween costumes, Christmas decorations and ornaments. Donated books sell for 10 cents, said Walker.

Donations are accepted anytime through donation boxes located behind the building. The items should be clean and functional, said Katie Sawyer, volunteer and chairperson of the Thrift Shop's board of directors.

"This is a really neat and clean place to shop, and it's all good stuff, said Joyce Huffman, a Thrift Shop shopper. "There are helpful people who work here, and they're all friendly."

The shop also offers consignments where active duty and retired servicemembers can allow the Thrift Shop to sell their goods and receive a percentage of the price.

"The Thrift Shop is a clearinghouse for people who want to sell their unwanted items," said Walker.

Servicemembers and their family members who are interested in consignments can put up to 15 items a day on consignment and set the price themselves — 75 percent goes to the

seller and 25 percent goes to the shop.

The Thrift Shop returns the money from sales back to the community in the form of grants. For example, when Army Community Services sends needy soldiers and their families to the Thrift Shop, it can give them vouchers worth up to \$100, which to purchase any of the various household necessities that it carries, said Sawyer.

Families who have a family member who has been medically evacuated to Madigan Army Medical Center and are staying at the Fisher House on post can go to the Thrift Shop and receive a \$50 voucher to purchase clothing, said Sawyer.

The Thrift Shop staff is anticipating the projected opening of a separate clearance center located in Building 5229 in November. With its bag sale every first Saturday, shoppers are invited to purchase the whole thing for \$3, said Sawyer.

It is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and the first Saturday of every month, 10



Pvt. Leah R. Burton

Jacqueline Holcombe-Fields (left), a child care provider with Family Child Care on post, shops for toys and various items that will be enjoyable for the children.

a.m. to 2 p.m.

It is open for consignments Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 9

a.m. to noon, and for military personnel in uniform until 12:30 p.m., said Walker.

Soldier's infant daughter receives liver transplant, second chance at life

Spc. Steven J. Schneider
Northwest Guardian

Hannah L. Tucker was born March 26 to parents Christine E. and 1st Lt. William Tucker, platoon leader with Company C, 29th Signal Battalion.

Quickly, her health took a turn for the worse because the bile ducts underneath her liver were not working properly.

Procedures were performed at Madigan Army Medical Center, but after some time it was clear Hannah, now 6 months old, would need a new liver.

"The treatment was a partial success; it bought us time," the girl's father said.

When it was confirmed she needed a new liver, TRICARE paid for the Tucker family to stay in a motel in St. Louis so she could be helped at the St. Louis Children's Hospital.

"TRICARE took care of us," William said. "I can't praise the people at TRICARE enough."

Eight-and-a-half hours after it was decided Hannah needed a new liver, one became available.

"I was in shock," the lieutenant said. "It

was unbelievable. To be on the donor list for eight hours and to get an organ is unheard of."

If the liver wouldn't have become available, Christine said she would have given hers up.

William said it was a relief getting a liver so quickly.

"We had 100 percent support with everything," William said. It couldn't have gone any better."

Hannah and Christine have to stay close to St. Louis Children's Hospital while Hannah recovers. And William will

be joining them shortly 100 miles away at the University of Southern Illinois, where he has received a compassionate reassignment, so he can finish his degree and be close to his daughter.

He said his chain of command has helped him every step of the way. They never saw it as a burden when he needed to take time to take care of his daughter.

"The 29th Signal has been completely supportive," he said.

Hannah's surgery cost more than a million dollars; one prescription pill she's on alone costs \$1,000 a week.

"She will be on medication for life," William said, but he's just happy she's alive and well.

"I'd like to thank everybody that's helped," he said. "Things couldn't have worked out better."

Much of this was thanks to TRICARE and the United States Army, he said.

"Lieutenant Tucker and his family got a million dollar bonus," said Sgt. 1st Class Tommy L. Carson, career counselor, 29th Signal Bn. "The U.S. Army cares about you and your family. Don't forget that."

